

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 NEA-10 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00

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BANGKOK FOR RED

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECAFE OCON
SUBJECT: RED: ECAFE: CONFERENCE OF ASIAN STATISTICIANS: FIRST WEEK

REF: STATE 242257

1. SUMMARY: SLIGHTLY BEHIND SCHEDULE, CONFERENCE HAS STIMULATED LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS MAINLY ON: FUTURE OF ASIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE, MULTI-SUBJECT SURVEYS, RELATIONSHIP OF PLANNERS TO STATISTICIANS, EXPANDING USE OF DATA BASES AND DEFINITION OF UNDER EMPLOYMENT. ATMOSPHERE IS CONSTRUCTIVE AND COOPERATIVE; NO CONFRONTATION HAS ARisen NOR IS ANTICIPATED. ABSENCE OF U.S. CENSUS BUREAU REPRESENTATIVE NOTED.
END SUMMARY.

2. ASIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE (ASI) DIRECTOR NAIR PLEADED FOR THE CONTINUATION OF HIS ORGANIZATION AND SOUGHT SUPPORT. ECAFE STATISTICAL CHIEF VISWANATHAN ASKED CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES TO DOUBLE THEIR SUPPORT AND HOPED JAPAN WOULD PROVIDE DOLS 1 MILLION EQUIVALENT. CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR ASI WAS DECLARED BY AUSTRALIA, KOREA, JAPAN, MALAYSIA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, HONG KONG, FRANCE, UK, AND NETHERLANDS BUT THERE WERE NO RPT NO FIRM COMMITMENTS OF FUNDS. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION REGARDING ASI CURRICULUM AND TRAINING AND SEVERAL COUNTRIES
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REQUESTED A LIST OF ALL SUCH INSTITUTES IN THE REGION. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ASI TRAINING WERE NEVER ANSWERED. THE PROBLEMS OF THE VARYING QUALIFICATIONS OF ASI CANDIDATES, THEIR LINGUISTIC QUALIFICATIONS, THE LOW NUMBER OF GRADUATES AND HIGH AND RISING COSTS WERE ALSO NEVER DISCUSSED IN DETAIL. NAIR EVEN INDICATED THAT ASI WOULD SOON BE ASKING FOR MORE SPACE IN TOKYO TO ACCOMMODATE THE ADDITIONAL FELLOWSHIPS

PROMISED. USDEL INDICATED NEITHER APPROVAL NOR DISAPPROVAL OF CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF ASI BUT, UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED, WILL NOT OBJECT IF FINAL REPORT INDICATES UNANIMOUS CONFERENCE SUPPORT FOR ASI. KEY MEETING OF ASI ADVISORY COUNCIL (AUSTRALIA, PHILIPPINES, MALAYSIA) IN JANUARY 1974 AND UNDP DECISION IN FEBRUARY WILL DETERMINE

ULTIMATE FATE OF ASI.

3. THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF MULTI-SUBJECT SURVEYS VS. UNI-SUBJECT SURVEYS OCCUPIED AN UNUSUAL AMOUNT OF TIME. MOST RECOGNIZED THE SAVINGS INHERENT IN MULTI-SUBJECT SURVEYS BUT OFTEN CITED BOTH STATISTICAL LIMITATIONS AND LACK OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY AS HANDICAPS. DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WITH CENTRAL STATISTICAL ORGANIZATIONS AGREED THEY COULD DO BOTH TYPES OF SURVEYS. USDEL RELATED SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY (SSA) USES OF BOTH THROUGH CENSUS BUREAU AND DESCRIBED THE REASONS FOR DATA SOUGHT BY SSA. WE SUPPORTED POINT MADE EARLIER BY UN STATISTICAL DIRECTOR GOLDBERG OF SIGNIFICANCE

OF ATTAINING "CRITICAL MASS" SCALE OF STATISTICAL OFFICE OPERATIONS - THE MERITS OF A CONTINUING DATA COLLECTION CAPACITY WITH ADVANTAGES OF CONTINUED TRAINING, IMPROVEMENT AND MOMENTUM.

4. DESPITE MALAYSIAN DELEGATES ENTHUSIASTIC CALL FOR "ALL POWER TO THE STATISTICIANS", DISCUSSION REVEALED GENERAL (ALTHOUGH RELUCTANT) AGREEMENT WITH PAPUA NEW GUINEA REPRESENTATIVE'S RECOGNITION THAT "STATISTICIANS ARE THE SERVANTS OF PLANNERS." ALL AGREED THAT STATISTICIANS AND PLANNERS SHOULD COOPERATE; SOME EVEN REVEALED THAT STATISTICIANS BY THEIR OWN CHOICE OF SURVEYS ACTUALLY LEAD PLANNERS TO SOCIO-POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE GOALS. MANY ARGUED THAT STATISTICIANS MUST BE LEFT TO SET THE PRIORITIES FOR STATISTICAL SURVEYS.

5. ALL REPRESENTATIVES, EXCEPT INDIAN, AGREED ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPUTERIZED DATA BASES WAS USEFUL GOAL. ONLY JAPAN AND AUSTRALIA UNCLASSIFIED

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HAVE ESTABLISHED READILY ACCESSIBLE DATA BASES IN THE REGION. INDIANS CLAIMED THEY NEEDED MORE INTERORGANIZATIONAL DISCIPLINE AND BETTER LINKAGES IN THEIR STATISTICAL SYSTEM BEFORE ESTABLISHING DATA BASES. INDIA WONDERED IF IT NEEDED FAST RETRIEVAL IN ITS DATA BANK IF IT TAKES OVER A YEAR TO GET THE DATA. USDEL INDICATED INTEREST IN DATA BASES IN THE REGION AND DESCRIBED BRIEFLY THE PROBLEM POSED BY CONFIDENTIALITY IN OUR ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH AN INDUSTRIAL DIRECTORY. WE ALSO TOUCHED ON SSA SAMPLES OF ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

DATA AS A WAY OF AVOIDING BEING OVERWHELMED BY THE VOLUME OF DATA.

6. MANY REPRESENTATIVES DISCUSSED THEIR INDIVIDUAL DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING MEANINGFUL DATA ON UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT BECAUSE OF THE RESTRAINTS IMPOSED BY SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND CUSTOMS. ILO DEFINITIONS ARE DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO APPLY TO RURAL SOCIETIES.

7. USDEL WAS QUERIED BY SEVERAL DELEGATIONS ON ABSENCE OF U.S. CENSUS BUREAU OFFICIALS WHO HAD ALWAYS ATTENDED PREVIOUS CONFERENCES. STRONG INTEREST ON PART OF MANY DELEGATES IN U.S. LEADERSHIP IN STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES AND USE OF COMPUTERIZED DATA BASES SUGGEST THAT A U.S. CENSUS BUREAU REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD ALWAYS ATTEND THEIR CONFERENCES. IF ECAFE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE HAVE THEIR WAY, STATISTICIANS WILL IN FUTURE MEET ONLY ONCE EVERY TWO YEARS. MOYNIHAN

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